

Tactical Aircraft Integration (TacAir)



The Navy and Marine Corps Team's Tactical Aircraft (TacAir) Integration plan will enhance core combat capabilities and result in a more potent, cohesive, and affordable fighting force. This integration is a culmination of a long-term effort to achieve greater combat capability with regard to Naval TacAir and represents a shared commitment to use the resources provided to the Department of the Navy (DON) as judiciously as possible.

Integration efforts have been underway for several years. Since early 2004, five of the Marine Corps' 14 F/A-18 Hornet squadrons have been operating from Navy aircraft carriers as part of their embarked carrier air wings. The first Navy F/A-18 squadron deployed to Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, Japan, in support of the Unit Deployment Program in the fall of 2004.

Key points of the TacAir Integration plan include:

- It retains our culture and reinforces our expeditionary ethos.

- It provides a smaller, yet more capable and more affordable force.

- It integrates Marine TacAir on all Navy aircraft carriers.

- It integrates Navy TacAir into the Unit Deployment Program.

- It globally sources all Department of the Navy (DoN) TacAir assets to ensure support to the Marine Air-Ground Task Force.

- It provides increased combat capability in forward areas.

- It is in concert with the enhanced Seabasing concept.

A cornerstone of this plan is DoN funding and maintenance of legacy aircraft at the highest levels of readiness, until the Joint Strike Fighter and F/A-18E/F replace them. This requires an unwavering commitment to a heightened strike-fighter readiness across the DoN. The readiness levels associated with integration will allow the DoN to surge more aircraft than is within our means today.

To confront the challenges posed by the changing conduct of war and rapid evolution of technology, the Navy and Marine Corps will leverage their respective service's

strengths to integrate when and where appropriate. Integration will produce a more effective and efficient naval force with improved warfighting capabilities. TacAir integration, coupled with new technology, service reorganization, and doctrine, will enable Naval Aviation to provide a unique, flexible, sea-based capability that will provide a greater range of options to the theater and Marine Air-Ground Task Force MAGTF commanders. This co-evolution of technology, organizations, and concepts that surrounds TacAir integration and the JSF will truly provide a transformational warfighting capability to land- and sea-based naval forces.

Naval Aviation will be fully integrated

into task-organized Expeditionary Strike Groups and Carrier Strike Groups, enhancing the strategic agility, operational reach, and tactical flexibility of U.S. naval expeditionary forces. Navy and Marine Corps aircraft will operate from sea bases, optimized austere bases ashore, and right-sized expeditionary airfields with a new generation of lethal aircraft, providing naval and joint commanders with capabilities that were unattainable until now.

Integrated Naval TacAir, which will also possess significant low-observable strike capabilities embodied in the Joint Strike Fighter, will be capable of delivering fires across the breadth and depth of the joint battlespace. Greatly improved strike options



for the MAGTF and theater commanders will be realized by fusing information from naval, joint, and national resources. Battlespace awareness will be measurably improved through the integration of networked forces and assets. Marine Corps and Navy forces will be seamlessly networked with pervasive intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance assets—including unmanned and autonomous sensors—allowing them to cover the entire battlespace.

Current service doctrines and training have traditionally focused on the employment of air power at the tactical level (close air support) or the strategic level (long-range strike or interdiction). Now, MAGTF, joint force, or theater commanders can leverage

Naval Aviation's distinctive characteristics at the operational level. Organizational and cultural change, coupled with new technology and innovative operating concepts, is fundamentally changing Naval Aviation and achieving exponential increases in its capabilities.

The naval air forces will take advantage of their reach, flexibility, sensors, and weapons to project power from both dispersed and networked sea and land bases through air-delivered fires and maneuver. This scalable and continually transforming force will provide the capabilities and flexibility required by U.S. joint force commanders, and will play a key part in achieving ultimate victory.

